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ABSTRACT

The role of the elementary school secretary in relationship to school administration is examined in this book, which analyzes the practical and theoretical importance of the role. Methodology involved qualitative data from onsite observations and interviews conducted in 6 schools, quantitative data from a national survey of 350 out of 724 elementary school secretaries (a 49 percent response rate), and archival data from job descriptions and educational administration textbooks. The first chapter offers a historical overview of the role, tracing its evolution from the early 1920s to its current form. Chapter 2 examines secretaries' characteristics as females employed as clerical workers, focusing on demographics and descriptions of job and school settings. Roles, responsibilities, and relationships are explored in the third chapter. The secretary/principal relationship and the influence of the principal's gender are discussed in chapter 4. The final chapter offers a summary and recommendations, concluding that secretaries are an important asset in the achievement of school goals; however, current policies tend to hinder their effectiveness. School secretaries hold "intermittent power," experience unique multiple demands, have low social status, yet are essential to the school culture. Seven figures are included. (93 references) (LMI)

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